

American Opinion Summary

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RUSSIA AND CUBA

Elation tinged with caution greets Khrushchev's apparent agreement to withdraw his missile build-up in Cuba.

U.S. firmness is given credit. As the New York Herald Tribune expresses it, "the decisive contribution to peace was made by the grim, gray line of warships that have been standing guard off Cuban shores." Back of this, the Herald Tribune notes, were Mr. Stevenson's effective presentation of the U.S. case in the UN, and the support by the OAS, NATO, and the American people.

Khrushchev's bluff "having been called by President Kennedy, he has reverted to a posture of statesmanship," the Baltimore Sun comments. The Washington Star says Khrushchev "backed away... when it became clear to him that the United States meant business." The Wall Street Journal draws the lesson that "when we are willing to employ our power, we can put the enemy on the defensive, and even on the run."

The Washington Post holds that President Kennedy's "steadiness of purpose and firmness of action, without either bluster or reckless display of strength, has won respect the world over."

However, the feeling also persists that we are not out of the woods yet. Much "must still be done to clarify the remaining problems and to assure performance of the pledges given," the New York Times cautions.

"Deeds, not words, must finally resolve the Cuban crisis," the Philadelphia Inquirer asserts. Several members of Congress express skepticism about Khrushchev's following through [e.g. Reps. Saylor (R-Pa.), Rogers (D-Colo.), Peterson (D-Utah), Harsha (R-Ohio), Sens. Bennett (R-Utah), Young (R-N.Dak.)].

Even "the agreed solution of Soviet-American difficulties in Cuba has loose ends," the New York Herald Tribune notes. The Washington Post suggests that "delicate negotiations lie ahead to avoid any misunderstanding that the United States is guaranteeing the survival of the Castro regime."

Scripps-Howard's Washington News warns against assuming "that the Cuban settlement will measurably clear the international skies." Noting that Berlin and other potential crisis spots remain, it asserts that "the road remains perilous."

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At the same time, a number say this may be a turning point in the cold war, offering hope for the settlement of other cold war problems. "If the Cuban crisis can really be liquidated in a spirit of conciliation and good faith, a new era for mankind will have dawned," the Washington Post asserts. The Post sees the possibility of "a rational settlement in Berlin and steady progress toward disarmament."

The New York Herald Tribune holds that the week of crisis "marked a significant turning point in the Cold War." Everyone must hope for "resolution of some of the thorniest and most dangerous problems confronting the world," the Herald Tribune adds. According to the Philadelphia Inquirer, "this is a time not for relaxation of peace efforts but for an intensification of them." The New York Times sees hope "not only for a solution of the Cuban crisis but also of the broader problems dividing East and West."

The possibility of ultimately reducing U.S. missile strength in Turkey is suggested, although commentators reject a pressured "swap" of Turkish for Cuban bases or any sacrifice of Turkey's defenses (e.g. Phila. Inquirer, Wall St. Journal, Wm. R. Hearst, Jr.). According to James Reston, the difficulties would be less military than "psychological and political"--to avoid any loss of confidence among our NATO allies. The Washington Post thinks maintenance of the NATO deterrent at its present strength could be worked out.

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